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**CRIMINOLOGY ON THE BUSES:  
HOW DO STRUCTURES OF  
NEOLIBERALISM AND CULTURE IMPACT  
CRIME AND ROLE PERFORMANCE  
WITHIN THE BUS INDUSTRY?**

***Thomas Roscoe<sup>1</sup>***

**Abstract**

The bus industry within the United Kingdom accounted for four and a half billion local journeys to year ending March 2016 (Department for Transport, 2016). With so many journeys being made there needs to be a focus on safety for passengers, whilst there are extensive laws in place and bodies such as the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to govern the operation of bus services, there has been little criminological focus on the crimes and harms that occur within the industry. Typically, crime on buses has formed a sub section for wider spatial studies of crime, or crimes, which find their setting within buses (Hayes and Prenzler, 2014). Whilst the topic of crime on buses is important to consider, it is just important to study the crimes that are encouraged and occur within the neoliberal structure of the industry and the operating companies within. By using a methodological approach of ethnography and interviews within a bus company, the research was been able to establish that culture and subcultures have a profound impact on an individual's propensity to commit crime. One's propensity to commit crime in the pursuit of profit is determined by their alignment to either the values of driver culture or the values of the company. The drive for profit has been made necessary by the deregulation of the bus industry.

**Keywords:** Deregulation, Occupational Culture, Organisational Culture, Neoliberalism, Subculture

**Introduction**

The Transport Act 1985 permanently changed the direction and aims that are held within the operating companies of the UK industry. This Act led to the privatisation of the industry and made the pursuit of profit the main aim for bus operators. Butcher (2010) attributed the 'drastic changes to both the operating environment and pattern of ownership' (p.6) to the deregulation as a result of the Transport Act. This drastic change to the operating

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environment denotes a greater push for profit and profitability from bus services, and has allowed the industry to become encompassed in the wide reach of neoliberalism. Throughout the research it became increasingly clear to the researcher that use of buses is no longer thought of as using a service but rather is now the consumption of a product, at least this is how rhetoric and actions of companies appears. Drivers do understand the need for profit to ensure that a company can continue to operate efficiently, it is perceived by drivers that their role to play in this strain towards profit is to ensure that they drive in a timely manner where the timetable is key; whether or not it is the intention of the operating company to reinforce this rhetoric is irrelevant when considering the impact of neoliberalism has on crime within the bus industry. Typically, the study of crime on buses has been restricted to being used as examples within wider spatial studies of crime, where the bus is solely their setting (Hayes and Prenzler, 2014); however this research has investigated the crimes committed 'by' buses rather than 'on' buses. For the purpose of the research crimes 'by' buses refer to the acts which are committed in the pursuit of profit, in the case of buses the most common crimes were speeding, and possible safety breaches.

This research has focused on the impacts that may cause a driver to commit these crimes. By conducting both ethnographic participation and nine semi-structured interviews, the researcher was able to determine these main factors to be neoliberalism and the culture amongst drivers. It was important to make key observations early on in order to better shape the remaining research, these early observations included the prominence of two distinct cultures, those being the organisational and occupational cultures.

Observations took place whilst the researcher was at work, as a bus driver, most of this research focused on the evident *Canteen Culture* (Loftus, 2010; and Waddington, 1999). This focus took place generally whilst he was on breaks and in the canteen. The canteen within the working environment provided an interesting space for investigation as it was not only the place where culture is most evident, but also where the different subcultures met and interacted. As this research was taking place whilst I was working, I adopted a semi-covert role; a criticism that is often levelled at the nature of covert research (Homan, 1980 and 1991) is that it encourages an entirely dishonest position. For me this position was not entirely dishonest, the management of the company I was working for were made aware of my position as researching whilst working and I was completely open when asked about my studies, including this research. Drivers within the organisation felt a mistrust towards management and if it were obvious that I was researching there would be a suspicion of me and possibly a belief that I was working on behalf of the company rather than for myself, it was therefore essential to adopt a semi-covert role. A key issue that exists within many

ethnographies of certain workplaces and roles is getting access to the research space, for Calvey's study of bouncers (2008) highlighted issues including access but also wider issues experienced whilst conducting ethnographic research. One key issue that would provide a barrier to studying this area ethnographically is the numerous tests that would be to be passed to be able to act in the role of a bus driver, this was no issue as the researcher was already a driver prior to this research. Furthermore, a key ethical concern for Calvey was 'faking friendships' (2008, p.911), for me these friendships already existed, and continue to do so. Another key issue discussed by Calvey was obtaining and being able to display relevant cultural capital (Also see Wacquant, 1995; Winlow, 2001), again the researcher already possessed the necessary knowledge and customs surrounding this area. It was clear to me that issues such as Rafferty (2004, p.128) trying to 'remember the details of a fabricated life' and MacIntyre (1999) finding difficulty in convincing others of their portrayed identity, would not be a major issue as this groundwork was already in place. Whilst all of the above issues were not as prominent for this research, one issue with ethnography would be more probable and needed close attention. Kanuha (2000) discusses the possible ways of researching certain spaces and the issues that may arise around 'going native', as I had already been conducting the role of bus driver Kanuha would class my role as a researcher being done as an 'insider' (p.439). This would be advantageous as it meant I had previous knowledge and experience which would allow me to quickly determine which areas would be of interest, however could lead to me overlooking aspects which may not seem significant as they may occur daily, these difficulties however did not arise as I was able to maintain distance as a researcher.

I also conducted nine interviews alongside my observation to get a better understanding of my own experience and how it fit in with wider experiences of drivers; who had perhaps worked elsewhere, had more, or less, experience, and also were part of different subcultures within the workplace. My early observations highlighted that there were three main subcultures, three interviews for each subculture worked well as I was getting similar themes within all of the interviews. It was necessary to identify which subculture drivers belonged to, fortunately this was obvious in this workplace and could be established by where they sat in the canteen, but the behaviour of different drivers made it fairly obvious which subculture they subscribed. The use of semi-structured interviews alongside observations is not common and Thomas (2013) argues that unstructured interviews are necessary, however for this research I could embark upon semi-structured interviews as I already had prior knowledge of the industry and which issues needed to be discussed. Had I used unstructured interviews it may have taken a lot longer to reach a point of theoretical saturation (Bachman et al, 2017).

The issues at the heart of my research, crime and culture, were addressed within both methods of the research. Crimes that were committed became obvious to me throughout my observation, and conversations around those issues occurred frequently within the canteen; the topic was also a key aspect of the interviews and that issue was discussed at great lengths by some. The topic of culture was also obvious to me throughout my observation, as was the relationship between occupational and organisational culture.

## **1 Literature Review**

Criminology has had a long-term interest in how neoliberalism can cause crime; whilst there are arguments around the harms of neoliberalism and how it can lead individuals to crime, Merton's Strain Theory (1957) is an early example of focus on the relationship between monetary goals and crime. Whilst it is important to consider the effects to individuals, it is equally important to adopt a focus which looks at the effects of competition and the culturally accepted goals of capitalism have. Reiner (2007) discusses the impacts that neoliberalism has on individual aspects of conditions for crime. Whilst this overview is very useful, it focuses on the impact upon the individual that neoliberalism has, however the basic principles could be transferred when discussing crimes committed by companies. When discussing occupational crimes, it is important to adopt a focus around the concept of white collar crime, as defined by Sutherland (1983). Whilst Sutherland's definition does little to offer a reason for white collar crime occurring, it has opened discussions around the topic. Tappan argues that offences which are committed by businesses and business people are inherently different from criminal ones, and that actions which Sutherland's definition would criminalise are within normal business practice (Tappan, 1947). Tappan's definition is very useful when looking at white collar crime as it helps us to understand that criminality, or at least criminal actions, are a part of business practice. Box (1983) argued that if legal means are blocked then it may become necessary to adopt an illicit approach to achieve the goals set by capitalism. These corporations then seek to ensure that their workers can justify such actions because 'business is business' (Pearce, 1976; Punch, 1996). The area of white collar and business crime is rich in detail referring to the actions of businesses and their executives, but fails to realise that the crimes committed by those on the front line in the line of work. This area tends to go un-researched as it has little impact as those committing the crimes have such little influence in the wider context that their actions are not likely to affect many people.

Slack (1997) proposed the key aspects of culture to be symbols, rituals, and stories. The work of Aicher and Cunningham (2011) found culture within professional sport to be made

from two standpoints, either proactive or compliant cultures. Choi and Scott (2008) focused upon cultures within AAA baseball, and looked to see how culture in this setting is often manipulated by managers to encourage positive outcomes. The work of Choi and Scott can provide an interesting avenue when looking at organisations outside of sport, where culture and management are two distinct diametric opponents, as seen with Trice's (1993) work on structures of workplaces and how management and cultures interact. For Wallace and Weese (1995) the culture within sports can be built by strong leadership and with guidance from managers. Whilst there is an agreement that culture in professional sport is inclusive of management and players it can help to provide us with the ability to be able to look at the different terms used within studies of culture. Within studies of sports, the term organisational culture is used to encompass all; however, within other organisations where there are value clashes within cultures, it can be useful to consider different terms for what may seem similar.

Whilst the benefits of culture are greatly discussed there is also evidence that its presence can be a barrier to conducting best practices. Williams et al (2015) identify that the features of nursing culture can be a barrier to implementing new practices. Alongside the organisational culture, the actualities of roles, and the associated pressures are barriers to implementing new practices. Williams et al (2015) identify that there is an attitude of 'this is how it's always been done' (p.39), this is a clear example of the ways in which culture is resistant to change and itself takes many years to change. Evidence (Sams et al, 2004) suggests that the culture is resistant to outside help and the cultural group assumes a moral authority whereby only they know how to best perform their role. Gray et al (2013) identify that this feeling of mistrust of management can lead to nurses and healthcare professionals being resistant to implementing new practice as they feel that they will be held accountable if something goes wrong (see Scott and Pollock, 2008). The link that is evident within professional sporting cultures, whereby strong management and leadership can dictate the direction of culture, is also found within nursing by the work of Gerrish and Clayton (2004) and Plath (2013). Whilst the relationship between management and culture is highlighted multiple times, the direction in which culture travels is dependent on the relative strengths of both structures, as seen in Trice's (1993) grid pattern. Whilst it is entirely possible that management can dictate the direction of culture there has to be a differentiation between workplaces where this is possible and ones where it is not. The implementation of best practice is important within the healthcare industry and research has recognised the relationship present between its inception and implementation. For the implementation to be successful there needs to be input from all sections of the workplace and all working groups' needs need to be considered (Gifford et al, 2007; Ogijehor-Enoma et al, 2010; Santos, 2012;

Smith and Donze, 2010). Another factor that impedes the implementation of best practice is the misalignment of goals between management and staff; organisational goals focused around political and financial targets, whereas staff focused more on professional goals and development (Bartelt et al, 2011; Golenko et al, 2012; Green and Ruff, 2005; Karin et al, 2009; Kenny et al, 2010; Rycroft-Malone, 2004). The differentiation that is drawn between individual goals and the goals of the organisation provides an interesting avenue of consideration, it will be particularly useful when considering compliance, or resistance, to the goals of organisations.

Criminological focus within the area of culture has focused on cultures evident within policing. Loftus (2009, 2010) identifies that culture is a crucial part of socialisation for new officers; culture within the police informs the way that policing is learned and performed. Loftus (2010) identifies that the culture amongst officers is based on masculine norms, and this means softer approaches to policing are valued less. Another aspect of police culture for Loftus is managing the realities of policing, it is identified that officers are often engaged in tasks which do not fit in with what they believed the job would involve (Loftus, 2010), for van Maanen (1978) a lot of policing action and held perspectives are in response to the realities of the job. Paoline (2003) also notes that culture allows officers to cope with the dangers and uncertainties of their role. The realities of the job led to a sense of helplessness within officers (Loftus, 2010). Reiner (2000) notes that the realities of the role and the position that officers occupy within society leads to social isolation. This isolation leads to a greater togetherness and sense of duty to each other (Skolnick, 1966; Manning, 1977). Loftus (2010) found that in locations where there were low levels of supervision officers engaged in 'easing behaviour' (Cain, 1973, p.42), this behaviour amounted to 'occupational deviance' (Loftus, 2010, p.13). The behaviour discussed by Loftus was not in line with the tasks that officers should have been undertaking and officers relied on the solidarity amongst officers to ensure that this deviance went unreported. For Manning (1978) the solidarity within policing ranks relates closely to lying and secrecy, and Chan (1996) found that officers were told 'Cover yourself and don't rat on others' (p.121). Goldsmith (1990) found that officers could rely on each other to assist each other when they are being confronted by external threats and pressures. The prominence of supervisory control and actions of officers can be closely linked to the grid structure as proposed by Trice (1993) and helps us to determine the relative strengths of management and culture amongst frontline officers; whilst the culture amongst officers is strong there is evidence still of fractures and conflict amongst officers (Fielding, 1989; Loftus, 2010). Themes picked up by Loftus (2010), such as the hatred of other officers as the others were 'bone idle' (p.14), also link in closely to the ideas of Trice (1993) whereby he identified that those who do not conform to overall culture are

disliked. Skogan (2008) notes that police culture is a key reason why police reforms fail, the culture is resistant to reforms as they do not agree with the values of the culture, in similar fashion to the ineffectiveness of the attempts to implement evidence based practice within nursing. Whilst the structure of police culture has many benefits for its members it can have a negative impact on the way that the role of policing is performed and often leads to that role being mis-performed. One issue that Ingram et al (2013) note when considering police culture is that its conception assumes that it is a 'monolithic phenomenon shared by all' (p.366). Loyens (2009) questions whether there is only one true occupational culture, and Chan (1996) developed criticism of the view that there is a monolithic approach to culture and policing. For Chan (1996) the classical approach to culture did not account for internal differentiation; and presupposes passive and automatic socialisation of new members. Within policing, a key variation within culture is somebody's rank. Reuss-Ianni (1983) adopted a two-culture approach, whereby they argued that there are two distinct cultures within policing organisations. Punch (1983) and Prenzler (1997) identify that the two cultures discussed by Reuss-Ianni are those of officers on the street, and high-ranking officers.

Recently there has been a rise in private policing, Loyens (2009) identifies the intrinsic differences between the cultures that are evident within both public policing and private policing. The shift towards private, money making interests has had a noticeable effect on cultures evident within policing (Loyens, 2009), and is likely to be evident within any industry that has experienced a similar shift. Within the private security industry there is evidence that the culture that develops is context bound (Manzo, 2004) and segmented (Singh and Kempa, 2007). The most obvious difference between private and public policing is the interests they seek to protect; whereas the public police are there to protect the public, the private security industry are there to protect private capital interests. A comparison of the cultures existing within the two groups can help us to understand how action is informed by capital interest rather than public service interests. Manzo (2004) notes that in malls, private security officers have to balance themselves between security, customer service, and commercial interests; this salient difference between private and public policing is clearly the result of neoliberalism. Button (2007) found that in the face of the need to balance interests, private security officers would adopt a range of different working styles. In the more economically driven private security industry the idea of service quality was a major factor for workers; Terpsta (2016) and Wakefield (2008) note that officers felt that it was of paramount importance to ensure that citizens are satisfied with their work, whereas the emphasis was not as high for public policing. The private security industry is heavily client-driven (Sklansky, 2007), the result of this neoliberal stance is that the methods and behaviours of private officers is greatly different to the actions of public police officers. It is



clear to see that where the emphasis for policing shifts from public interests to private capital interests, culture does not majorly differ. The fact that culture remains similar throughout the private and public security industry highlights that culture has shifted from its early conceptions as influencing action, and is rather now a tool which individuals can call upon when considering action.

## **2 Findings**

The shift toward goals and aims that has been encouraged by the deregulation of the industry has changed the dynamic of public transport and travel. Rhetoric has changed with greater emphasis on bus travel being a product and those who use it as customers. Public transport is no longer a service to be used, but is a commodity to be consumed; therefore, pressures which face operators have greatly changed. The strain to profit determines much of how a driver must perform their role. The issue of timeliness is the one where crime is most likely to be committed in pursuit of profit:

*“We’re always encouraged to remember that the company has to make money to continue.... You feel the pressure most of the time at work.” Participant i8*

The pressure of making sure that you are on time as a driver is felt throughout the driver community. Whilst there is not a constant pressure from management to be on time, the immediate responses of supervisors and controllers is very important in reinforcing rhetoric. Supervisors and controllers ensure that services run as close to on-time as possible, these roles are concerned with managerialism and performance goals (Cockroft and Beattie 2009). This pressure can lead to certain crimes, which are perceived as serving this cause, the first is speeding:

*“Speeding? Yeah everyone does it, it’s the only way to be on time sometimes.” Participant i5.*

Further to this sentiment, throughout my observations it was clear that speeding is not perceived as abnormal. There is much bravado associated with this topic. A discussion in the canteen on 19/12/16 highlighted this; drivers boasting about how they managed to ‘make up’ a lot of time, reducing their lateness, not only was there an admittance of speeding but also a sense of superiority because of it. An interesting phrase that is often cast about within the industry is ‘There’s drivers, then there’s drivers’, this phrase is a way of challenging drivers to be on time, to ensure that they are thought of as being in an elite camp. Whilst it is clear that speeding does occur in order to stay on time, or at least to *make up* time, drivers sometimes have other motivations for speeding. Whilst a company would seek to ensure timeliness to maintain good service, drivers do it for selfish purposes also. The phenomena

of 'chasing a fag', this practice is where a driver will look to be on time at the end of a journey and to be able to take advantage of the time that is allocated for a 'turn-around', which is designed to ready oneself for the return journey, to have a cigarette. Even amongst those who do not smoke, that time provides drivers with respite from pressures that are present whilst driving:

*"I don't smoke, but I always want to have that time at the end just to chill for a bit."*  
*Participant i4.*

Aside from the practice of chasing that break, drivers may also be looking to go home on time and speed to ensure so, numerous times people said, 'I won't be late leaving to go home, don't you worry' after they began their section of work late due to external issues. The above issue is also evident within discussions around 'dead' runs, where there are no passengers and drivers are only there to start their route from elsewhere besides their depot. There is no reason to speed on these runs as the time allocated to do them is generally perfect. However, these 'dead' runs are perfect for those seeking to exude a sense of bravado; on 17/12/16 there was a canteen discussion about how quickly people have completed these trips. Although I have discussed the issue of speeding, in general it is the matter of a few miles an hour over the limit, it can provide an interesting topic to discuss the labelling of criminals and crime as these are technically crimes, but would that make a driver a criminal? However, more crimes that are serious are committed in the pursuit of profit. Safety is an issue which requires great attention within the bus industry, with every vehicle taking passengers needing to be safety checked on departure from its depot, but is one where crimes are committed. Driver discussions within the canteen often touch upon these issues, as it did on 22/12/16, where a driver complained that:

*"[Supervisor] tried to send me out with a serious issue on the bus, I weren't taking that, I coulda lost me licence."*

This issue generally arose when there were not enough serviceable buses to cover operational requirement. Alongside this; drivers who 'booked' buses off, when a defect is realised that means the bus cannot be used anymore, and the bus is taken off service, were seen as troublesome, even though they had a legal responsibility to report the defect and stop the bus being used; their actions, although correct, often jeopardised services running on time. The main issue with these crimes is that it is common knowledge throughout the workforce that they take place; with one employee saying:

*"If they sack me, I'll get VOSA [now the DVSA] out the back in the mornings."*

The DVSA, or VOSA as they were, is the official body governing the bus industry and safety issues; the threat is that if they were to go 'out the back', to the garage, in the mornings they would find illegal practices happening and as a result the company could lose its right to operate bus services. The commodification of public transport has encouraged a rise in the opportunities present, and motivations for, crime to be committed. The structures of culture, and subcultures, within this industry have a profound effect on an individual's decisions to not only commit crime, but also how they perform the wider role of bus driving.

As mentioned above, it is important to identify that there are multiple different cultures within the bus industry and it is important to define terms commonly associated with studies of culture within this context. Within this context, organisational culture will refer to the culture of the company, and occupational culture will refer to the culture amongst drivers. It is important to realise that the features of both types of cultures have different goals and aims, in similar manner to nurses in Bartelt et al (2011), and just as important is remembering that those cultures deal with different pressures and issues. The rhetoric that is passed down by management of the need to make money is the organisational culture, which is generally informed by the neoliberal capital market within which companies operate. Within the bus industry the occupational culture that has developed has done so in response to the organisational culture, and the external pressures that exist. The way in which the rhetoric of timeliness is passed down takes a form similar to the systemic violence discussed by Žižek (2008). The most obvious way that rhetoric is passed down is through supervisor's responses to lateness and perceived inaction.

As Campeau (2015) discussed, culture is a form of internalized norms and values; within the bus industry, this culture is clearly evident. The theme of helping each other out whilst on the road is very important, the isolation that is felt by police officers (Manning, 1977), is very evident.

*"There is a very strong community here and we all look to help each other when we are out on the road. Everyone here works hard and wants to be on time." Participant i3*

*"You've got to look out for your colleagues on the road, they're your only friends." Participant i2*

It is clear that drivers felt that there was this feeling of duty to each other, a lot of the time drivers would apologise to other drivers later in the day if they had not let the other driver out or not noticed them; this sentiment was genuine, even though sometimes it would have been

dangerous or impractical to give way. It was very interesting to observe that even though there was a level of apology, the other drivers generally understood why they were not let out, and had generally forgotten about the moment by the time that the other driver brought it to attention. These instances of apology prove that the culture amongst drivers was very strong; and breaking that culture, no matter the cause, enveloped a sense of guilt to fellow drivers. The most common observable expression of culture whilst on the road was the slowing down, and sometimes even stopping, on a roundabout to let a bus out from the next exit/ entrance to the roundabout; drivers' sense of commitment to culture and other drivers was more far more important than keeping traffic moving. The act of letting other buses in at roundabouts can be of great interest as drivers would not only let drivers from the same company in, but also drivers from the competing operator. It is clear that the pressures of bus driving are felt by drivers and the culture that developed allows drivers to deal with those pressures through collective action, and the culture transcends neoliberal competition. Whilst Aicher and Cunningham (2011) argued that cultures would develop to be either proactive or compliant, this aspect of culture aligns much more closely cultures of policing as discussed by Goldsmith (1990), where the culture allowed police officers to rely on each other to assist when under external pressure. It is clear that drivers hold their collective identity in higher regard than they seek to compete within the spirit of neoliberalism. Rather than competing across lines of neoliberal conflict, drivers collectively compete against the external pressures of the role. In similar fashion to the 'us versus them' attitude of Terrill et al (2003), drivers seem to adopt an us against the world attitude when driving.

Whilst there is a collective identity amongst bus drivers, a common issue that is often identified within studies of occupational culture is that there is an assumption that all workers subscribe to the same set of norms and values (Ingram et al, 2013). Whilst there is a general consensus of helping colleagues and other bus drivers, there are three identifiable subcultures within the canteen where there are different opinions and values on certain aspects of the role. Within the canteen the three subcultures are old-fashioned drivers (participants i1, i2, i3); heads down drivers (participants i4, i5, i6); and company drivers (participants i7, i8, i9). Old-fashioned drivers are generally those who are more experienced, and therefore have experienced changes that have occurred within the industry. These drivers value the *old way of doing things* (Participant i1), therefore they are less concerned with customer service elements of the job and consume themselves with safe driving. These drivers do not value customer opinion as highly, therefore can be seen as a subculture which does not conform to neoliberal principles.

When asked further about what the job should be about all of the participants within the subculture agreed that bus drivers are there to drive safely. This subculture is generally seen as more troublesome than others by managers and supervisors, drivers in this subculture are generally more experienced and have worked within the industry for many years, they generally seek to avoid stress but also tend to work at a steadier pace.

*"I won't speed to be on time, what's the point, you never get thanked for it, and if you get caught you get fined. I don't care if I'm late, I used to but now I don't see the point. If I'm late it means they [the company] should redo the timetables. I'm not going to stress myself out for them [the company]. I did all that stuff years ago, but now I just want an easy." Participant i2.*

The 'stressless' attitude that is adopted by these drivers leads to them being the least likely to commit crimes that are encouraged by the attitude and nature of the role that is encouraged by neoliberal pressures. Supervisory and management personnel see these drivers as trouble because, by not practicing their role in a manner which seeks to prioritise timeliness, their actions are seen as harmful to the business as it is perceived to lose the company money:

*"Oh, he's always trouble, never even tries to get back on time, I'll just change your bus." Supervisor, referring to an experienced driver.*

It is clear that the attitude of this subculture is resistant to company values and drivers value themselves more than the neoliberal priorities. By adopting the more egoistical attitude there can be an adverse effect on operational practices of companies as allowances and changes have to be made. Due to the nature of culture, this subculture dominates the canteen, and a lot of the occupational culture is made up from the beliefs of this subculture. As culture takes so long to change (O'Neill and Singh, 2007), it is generally indicative of a culture that was evident many years ago, therefore the old-fashioned way of performing the role is still valued and this ideology dominates the canteen and newer drivers find themselves beginning to value the thoughts held by these drivers and begin to copy them:

*"We all [drivers] get a bad name because of the old ones. I mean, you and me, we're not moody drivers, but because of the old ones everyone thinks that we are. The way they do things it infects everyone else and new drivers think it's the right way to do things. Some of us want to be friendly and good at customer service. Once they leave, or all die, we can then start to do things properly and give our job a professional image." Quote from a driver whilst speaking to them during observations (20/12/16).*

The driver that I was speaking to in the above quote falls into a second subculture within the workplace, the heads down drivers. This subculture is occupied by those drivers who have generally been driving for over a year but do not conform to the norms of the more traditional driving style. These drivers turn up to work to work and look to have a day without incident or intervention:

*“I just turn up to have a quiet day and go home again, if I’m on time all day then great, if I’m not then oh well, but I’ll still try to get back on time, unlike some of the other drivers.” Participant i4.*

With regards to a potential to commit crime, these drivers are at a greater risk of speeding than the more experienced drivers, but realise that sometimes the external factors that exist make it impossible to be on time all the time. Where these drivers value the autonomy that they have on the road, they look to adhere to company policies and practices to ensure that attention is not drawn to them. Even though these drivers seek to immerse themselves with the role they still have opinions of how others perform their role; ‘unlike some of the other drivers’ shows that there is an animosity towards those who do not pull their weight and do not seek to get back on time, similar to the ‘bone idle’ officers in Loftus’ study (2010, p.14). Whilst this subculture is open to speeding, it is only in situations where they can see an immediate benefit to doing so, for instance in the case of minor delays where speeding will allow them to negate this delay:

*“Yeah, I speed sometimes, but only if I’m a little late, once it gets past about 7 minutes I just give up and sit in the traffic. These new drivers seem to want to be on time even when it’s impossible, they go racing around when there’s no point – they’ll learn.” Participant i5.*

The above brings in the issue of speeding among new drivers, these drivers are generally found within the third subculture, company drivers. This subculture is made from the drivers who are very altruistic and put company needs above their own. Whilst this subculture includes new drivers it is not exclusive to this group, the subculture also includes those who seek to move up within the company. This group sticks very tightly to the aims and practices of the company:

*“You’ve always got to look at the bigger picture, if I don’t do my job properly then the company might lose out. If that means bending a few rules, then that’s what it means.” Participant i8.*

The attitude of these drivers found a consensus in considering the profitability of the company and how important it was. Whilst speaking to another driver the topic of profit was raised in relation to the competing company in the area:

*"[Competing company] care about their drivers, they're treated better. But I guess that's why they are losing loads of money and need to be sold." Other driver on 25/12/16.*

This other driver was company oriented, and they were able to neutralise the behaviour and practices that the company encourage and employed by saying it is necessary to make money. As a result, this subculture is far more open to criminality as a necessity for the successful performance of their role.

Of the three subcultures, the old-fashioned driving culture is the most impervious to change and as a result, the hardest to become a part of for drivers. Even if somebody performs their job in the exact manner that is evident within this subculture, they still need to be approved by the group. In a manner which resembles initiation rituals (Schwartz and Merten, 1968), being asked to, or told that you can, sit at the top tables means you have been accepted. Whilst sitting at a certain table may seem insignificant within this workplace it carried high symbolism. The exclusivity that shrouds itself around this subculture lead to the group being seen negatively by other drivers:

*"Those lot at the top table, I don't like them, they think they're better than the rest of us, just because they've been here for years." Participant i4.*

Whilst individual members of the subculture are not generally disliked, their manner of working causes issues for others. During my observation, I was told by another driver not to bother over-taking the driver in front, who was part of the old-fashioned driver subculture, because they would not try to do the same for me and they would *let you [me] do all the work* (31/12/2016). This shows that the culture amongst drivers is strong and valued highly by most, as the driver before me looked to help me. The conversation also shows that those who do not conform to the culture are singled out as troublesome and others do not help; this is example of Trice's (1993) work where those who do not conform to wider culture, helping other drivers, they are shunned by those who do conform to the wider culture. Whilst not all drivers may necessarily conform to the values and norms of the driver culture, the culture amongst drivers is much stronger when dealing with outsiders. These outsiders can be members of the public, or managers within their own company. The isolation that is experienced not only leads to the collective responses, as discussed above, but also leads to an 'us versus them' mentality, as seen also in Terrill et al (2003).

*“It’s not just the public that make this job hard, the pressure from above is difficult to deal with as well.” Participant i6.*

The collective identity provides great strength against outsiders. Chan’s (1997) analysis of culture allows us to look at the driver culture within the bus industry as a reaction to the cultural and structural contexts of the role. Where the habitus and field (Bourdieu, 1985) within this context are so strong, with the external pressures of traffic (field) and rhetoric of profit (habitus), there is the development of a very strong collective identity and culture which is resistant to new practices. The professionalisation of management structures, with many managers now holding degrees in various fields, the culture grows even stronger and more resistant to new ideas:

*“What do they know, they’ve never done the job, they’ve just got a degree, it’s just a token gesture getting them to do the bus test. They still don’t know how difficult it is and their ideas on making it better are silly.” Participant i7.*

The above is an example of how occupational cultures encourage a sense of moral authority on how to best perform their role, similar to (Brown et al, 2009). This very strong culture is met with a very strong management structure, these factors together allow us to identify a strong group/strong grid pattern, as part of Trice’s group/grid structure (1993). Where there is a strong culture amongst drivers and strong management structures it leads to neither belief prevailing, which in this case leads to a ‘multiplicity of cultures’, as in Fielding’s work (1988, p.9).

## **Conclusion**

The role of bus driver has undoubtedly changed as a result of the deregulation of the industry, as have the motivations and goals of companies. With this shift towards profit, there is a greater motivation for crime. The need for profit is indicative of the neoliberal impact within this once public industry and leads to an organisational structure which prioritises the need for timeliness in pursuit of profit. Whether or not it is the true will of managers for drivers to speed is not necessarily relevant, as the rhetoric that is passed down is received as a need to be on time to make profit. The power of the company that I experienced was immense and drivers felt as such, leading to a greater togetherness amongst drivers. The evident group/grid structure, as discussed by Trice, was strong on both sides, leading to a lack of true prevalence of either the rhetoric and preferred behaviour of either culture or company. This is evident within the differences between subcultures with more experienced drivers aligning with the values of culture and egoistic aims; whereas more company orientated drivers are more likely to commit crime as they are more closely



aligned with the values of the company and adopt a more altruistic manner. The collective identity provides great strength against outsiders, and those outsiders can also include managers within the same company. A driver's propensity to commit crime was determined by the subculture to which they existed, and within those subcultures there is a natural progression through all three depending on a driver's time within the company and their own personal developmental aims.

The evident culture transcends the lines of conflict encouraged by neoliberalism, especially with the practice described of letting any driver in at a roundabout. Where culture works across the typical lines of conflict under neoliberalism the pressures that are encouraged by the need for profit are alleviated under a collective attitude of *us versus the world*. The possible safety breaches that occur within the industry need the greatest attention as it can possibly put the public at risk of injury and danger. Whilst speeding obviously highlights a flaw in the expected operation of buses. The issues of safety breaches are of greater concern as speeding is generally the matter of a few miles an hour and is not a constant practice, with it only being adopted when there are delays. Whilst the potential safety breaches are seen as an alienable concept in the pursuit of timeliness, this may not be in line with the aims of the company I observed. Within the employee handbook, issued to all drivers, there are 41 mentions of safety, in 61 pages, with one instance saying, 'Safety is always the highest priority'. It is clear that safety is crucial to this company, but there is a breakdown in what is received by drivers as to what should be the priority. To solve this issue there needs to be a reimagining of how to encourage the company's priorities; the need for safety is communicated in written form, whereas the need for timeliness is more present in immediate forms of communication. To ensure that safety is more prominent in the thoughts and actions of drivers it needs to take centre stage in the rhetoric that is passed on in more immediate forms of communication. Whilst communicating rhetoric effectively is important the prominence of these crimes will continue within the context of neoliberalism and the external pressures that exist on a daily basis for drivers.

Whilst the three subcultures observed were strong in nature and the hold they had over their members meant that it could drastically impact somebody's propensity to commit crime there were still fractures within the subcultures. For instance, one driver who is part of the experienced subculture said that they had a 'lead foot' and always 'drive it [the bus] like its stolen', however it was also clear that this was not for the good of the company, rather it was for his own sanity and wanting to go home on time. Whilst the boundaries of the subcultures were rigid, it would not take a lot for somebody to move across to a new subculture, moving out of the company drive phase was most commonly due to a few bad days in a row where

the driver realises that being on time is not what is really important. Although there are three main subcultures, there are definitely strands within each where values and goals differ slightly between drivers.

The area of crime on buses is obviously of paramount importance due to the sheer number of people who use the services and the potential damage that can be caused by a 10+ tonne vehicle being driven improperly, whilst I have mainly discussed speeding and safety issues there also needs to be a consideration of crimes that are solely present within industries of professional driving, such as driving hours regulations. The crimes that are witnessed within this industry are down to its shift to a profit driven enterprise, but also can be due to egoistic reasons.

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